**Rehabilitation of Workers of Textile Mills**

4365. SHRI VIJAY PATEL : Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state :

(a) the policy of the Government to rehabilitate the workers of textile mills who rendered jobless due to closure;

(b) whether the Government have received any request from the Government of Gujarat seeking assistance for rehabilitation of such jobless workers;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) the action taken by the Union Government thereon?

THE MINISTER OF TEXTILES (SHRI R.L. JALAPPA) : (a) Government has established Textile Workers' Rehabilitation Fund to provide interim relief to the workers rendered jobless due to permanent/partial closure of a mill.

(b) to (d). According to Ministry of Industry, the Government of Gujarat has submitted a proposal to Ministry of Industry for grant of assistance from National Renewal Fund for 19 closed textile mills under liquidation. The proposal envisages, "inter-alia", takeover of assets of these mills by State Government, payment of legal dues to 30,150 workers, incentive for Area Regeneration and utilisation of assets of closed mills etc.

According to the Ministry of Industry, the proposal of State Government would be taken up after necessary approval to the operational modalities for grant of assistance from the National Renewal Fund has been obtained.

**Stock Market**

4366. SHRI TARIQ ANWAR : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government have permitted financial institutions to lend their shares to short-sellers in the stock market; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM) : (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

**Conference of Accountant Generals**

4367. DR. C. SILVERA : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether 19th Conference of the Accountant Generals was organised at New Delhi in recent past;

(b) if so, the details and objectives thereof;

(c) the details of suggestions made therein with steps to be taken to implement the same;

(d) whether the organisers have achieved the targets for holding such a meeting; and

(e) if so, the details thereof, and if not, reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM) : (a) and (b). A conference of Accountants General was held from 26-28 November 1996, mainly to refine and improve audit scope and methodology including mechanisation, and consider new approaches in audit to deal with the increasingly complex business of Government, huge investments in creation of economic assets and Government's spending in social sectors.

(c) to (e) The recommendations made in the Conference are under process.

**Home Loan Account Scheme of N.H.B.**

4368. SHRI K.P. SINGH DEO : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the National Housing Bank (NHB) has introduced a Home Loan Account Scheme recently;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the National Housing Bank proposes to reduce the rate of interest;

(d) if so, the extent thereof; and

(e) the details of the refinance scheme formulated by the National Housing Bank for Regional Rural Banks?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM) : (a) and (b). National Housing Bank (NHB) has reported that it introduced a loan linked saving scheme known as "Home Loan Account Scheme (HLAS)" with effect from July 1, 1989. Initially, the scheme was implemented by the network of scheduled commercial banks, which later on, was extended to select Housing Finance Companies (HFCs) and co-operative sector institutions. Under the scheme any individual can open an account and deposit any amount on recurring basis and earn an interest on deposit at the rate of 10.0% (Ten Per cent) per annum. The deposits made under HLAS are eligible for tax concession under Section 88 of the Income Tax Act, 1961. The account holder becomes eligible for housing loan in multiples of his accummulated deposits alongwith the accrued interest. The rates of interest charged on loans under HLAS as reported by NHB,

are as under :

| Loan as multiple of accummulated savings | Amount of Loan | Rate of Interest |
|---|---|---|
| (i) 4 times | Upto Rs. 50,000/- | 10.5% |
| (ii) 3 times | Above Rs. 50,000/- and upto Rs. 1 lakh | 12.0% |
| (iii) 2 times | Above Rs. 1 lakh and upto Rs. 2 lakh | 13.5% |
| (iv) 1.5 times | Above Rs. 2 lakhs | 14.5% |

NHB has further reported that under the HLAS the designated banks and HFCs have collected an amount of Rs. 365.86 crores upto the end of March, 1996, out of which an amount of Rs. 28.56 crores has been utilised by the implementing agencies so far.

(c) and (d). NHB has reported that there is no proposal at present to reduce the rates of interest on refinance by it.

(e) The Regional Rural Banks (RRBs) have been permitted by Reserve Bank of India to lend for housing activities in the rural areas upto 5% of their incremental deposits subject to a maximum ceiling of Rs. 1 lakh per borrower. In consultation with Reserve Bank of India and National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development, NHB has initiated the formulation of a scheme to refinance RRBs in this regard.

**Cheating of Bank**

4369. SHRI JANG BAHADUR SINGH PATEL : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether attention of the Government has been drawn to the newsitem captioned "CBI arrests four for cheating bank" appearing in the 'Hindustan Times' dated December 5, 1996;

(b) if so, the facts thereof;

(c) whether handwriting expert confirmed the bogus signatures on drawee bills, hundis and other bills;

(d) if so, the reasons as to why the bank officials failed in verifying the genuineness of signatures before clearing those documents and the action taken by the Authorities for the lapses; and

(e) whether the Government propose to ask the R.B.I. to collect the information of frauds etc, from the private sector banks also, and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM) : (a) to (d). Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) have reported that a case was registered by them on 23.5.1994 on the allegations that a fraud was committed by the Directors of M/s. R.K.B. Herbals P.Ltd., New Delhi in connivance with the Branch Manager of Vijaya Bank, R.K. Puram, New Delhi cheating the bank to the tune of Rs. 87 lakhs during the period 1987-1990 on the strength of bogus documents. CBI has also reported that the signatures appearing on the bogus hundies and invoices did not belong to any account holders whose specimen signatures are kept by the bank for verfication. The three Directors of the company and the Branch Manager were arrested on 4.12.1996 and the CBI propose to file charge-sheets for their prosecution in Court. The bank has conducted its own investigation into the matter and fixed accountability on 7 officials of the bank and initiated departmental action against them.

(e) Reserve Bank of India (RBI) have reported that frauds in banks for less that Rs. 1.00 crore are monitored by their regional officices while the frauds of Rs. 1.00 crore and above are monitored by Central Office of Department of Supervision of RBI. For cases of frauds of less that Rs. 1.00 crore, no statement/information regarding action taken against delinquent staff is obtained from private sector and foreign banks. However, these banks have clear instructions to report all cases of frauds of above Rs. 10,000/- to Police.

**Patent Right**

4370. SHRI SANAT KUMAR MANDAL : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether a WTO Committee is likely to visit India to investigate the charges of violation of Intellectual Property Rights;

(b) if so, the details of charges made against India;

(c) the Government views on intellecutual property rights in India; and

(d) the stand likely to be taken by the Government relating to patent-issues during the probe by the WTO Committee?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI BOLLA BULLI RAMAIAH) : (a) and (b). No Committee of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) is to visit India to investigate the charges of violation of intellectual property rights.

However, in pursuance of the provisions of Article 4 of the Understanding on Rules and Procedures Governing the Settlement of Disputes (DSU) of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) and Article 64 of the Agreement on Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights, on 2 July, 1996, the Government of the United States of America had sought consultations with India alleging the absence in India of either patent protection for pharmaceutical and agricultural chemical products or formal systems that permit the filing of patent applications for such products and that permit the grant of exclusive marketing rights in such products. The consultations were held on 27 July, 1996. The DSU provides that if